

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3088
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0646

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PLO, LY, UR
SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL ON QADHAFI VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: 76 MOSCOW 19377 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. MFA OFFICIAL DESCRIBES SOVIET-LIBYAN
POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS DURING QADHAFI VISIT AS "VERY,
VERY DIFFICULT" PARTICULARLY OVER LIBYAN REFUSAL TO
ACCEPT CONCEPT OF EXISTENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL, BUT ALSO
OVER MEPC AND LIBYAN INTEREST IN UN CHARTER REVISION.
SOVIET OFFICIAL DETECTS NO WAVERING ON QADHAFI SUPPORT
FOR ARAFAT, CLAIMS QADHAFI SINCERLY WANTS RAPPROACHE-
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MENT WITH SADAT, AND SPECULATES THAT QADHAFI INTEREST
IN ETHIOPIA MAY BE NATURAL REACTION TO "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC"
ALLIANCE OF SUDAN, EGYPT, AND SAUDI ARABIA. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING JAN 14 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, ASSISTANT
TO CHIEF, FIRST AFRICA DEPT, MFA, OLEG MIKHAILOVICH
NESTERENKO WAS QUITE FRANK IN ASSESSING QADHAFI

VISIT AS "DIFFICULT". NEGOTIATIONS OVER COMMUNIQUE, IN WHICH NESTERENKO PARTICIPATED, WERE "VERY, VERY DIFFICULT," HE SAID, PARTICULARLY OVER POLITICALLY IRRECONCILABLE SOVIET AND LIBYAN POSITIONS ON EXISTENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL. THREE DAYS ALONE WERE SPENT IN ARGUING OVER ONE SENTENCE IN WHICH TWO SIDES STATED CONVICTION THAT GENUINE PEACE IN M.E. COULD BE ACHIEVED ONLY IN EVENT OF LIBERATION OF "ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES". NESTERENKO WAS FREE TO ADMIT THAT BY THIS QADHAFI MEANT ELIMINATION OF STATE OF ISRAEL, BUT, HE ADDED, QADHAFI ALSO KNOWS THAT SOVIET UNION MEANT BY IT THE RETURN OF ISRAEL TO ITS 1967 BORDERS. NESTERENKO REPEATED THREE-POINT SOVIET POSITION ON M.E., INCLUDING RIGHT OF EXISTENCE OF ALL STATES IN REGION, SAID THIS HAD BEEN, WAS NOW, AND WOULD BE "PRINCIPLED POSITION" FROM WHICH SOVIET UNION WOULD NOT WAVER.

3. WHILE DIFFERING POSITIONS ON EXISTENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL MADE UP MOST DIFFICULT PART OF DISCUSSIONS, SAID NESTERENKO, MUCH TIME WAS ALSO SPENT IN EXPLAINING SOVIET POSITION ON MEPC, A SUBJECT ON WHICH, AS SOVIETS HAD EXPECTED, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND COMMON COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE. NESTERENKO REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON ACTION WHICH QADHAFI MIGHT TAKE AS RECONVENING OF MEPC CAME CLOSER TO REALITY.

4. THIRD POINT OF BASIC DISAGREEMENT, SAID NESTERENKO, WAS LIBYAN INTEREST IN UN CHARTER REVISION, PARTICULARLY ON CHANGING VETO POWER OF FIVE UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS. CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIET SIDE WAS ADAMENT ON THIS ISSUE, SAID NESTERENKO, AND NOTHING ON SUBJECT APPEARED IN COMMUNIQUE.

5. NESTERENKO DENIED POSSIBILITY THAT SEEMINGLY VAGUE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON PLO (REFTEL, PARA 2) INDICATED ANY WEAKENING IN QADHAFI'S SUPPORT FOR ARAFAT. QADHAFI HAS EMOTIONAL IDENTIFY WITH ALL PALESTINIANS, NESTERENKO EXPLAINED; HIS OUTLOOK DOES ENCOMPASS REJECTION FRONT, BUT HE IS ALSO SOLIDLY BEHIND PLO AND ARAFAT PERSONALLY.

6. ASKED ABOUT QADHAFI ATTITUDE TOWARD SUDAN AND EGYPT, NESTERENKO SAID CONTACT BETWEEN LIBYANS AND ETHIOPIANS MIGHT REFLECT "NATURAL REACTION" TO "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC" ALLIANCE OF EGYPT, SUDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. QADHAFI WOULD SINCERELY LIKE RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT, HE SAID; "THIS IS HIS DREAM AND HE BELIEVES IN HIS DREAMS." NESTERENKO FELT IT WAS SADAT AND HIS "IRRATIONAL STATEMENTS" WHICH PREVENTED NORMAL RELATIONS. HE SAID QADHAFI HAD BEEN ABLE TO NORMALIZE TUNISIAN-LIBYAN

RELATIONS WHICH AS LATE AS LAST MARCH HAD BEEN MARKED BY AN ALMOST "COLD WAR" ATMOSPHERE. NESTERENKO, CITING AN MFA APHORISM TO EFFECT THAT IT WAS BEST NOT TO MESS WITH THE POLICE OR WITH THE ARMY, REFUSED TO DISCUSS PRESENT OR FUTURE SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYANS.

8. ON QADHAFI PERSONALLY, NESTERENKO SAID HE HAD MET HIM FIRST IN LATE 1960'S AND FELT THAT QADHAFI'S BASIC PROBLEM WAS THAT HE WAS "TOO HONEST" TO BE A POLITICIAN. NESTERENKO DID NOT FEEL THAT QADHAFI'S VIEWS HAD MATURED OVER THIS PERIOD BUT ONLY THAT HE HAD LEARNED TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS IN TERMS WHICH WERE AT LEAST COMPREHENSIBLE, IF STILL UNACCEPTABLE TO NON-ARABS.

9. COMMENT. NESTERENKO, A VETERAN OF FOUR YEARS IN LIBYA, FOLLOWED BY FOUR YEARS IN HIS PRESENT POSITION, CONFIDENTIAL

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SEEMED SOMEWHAT BLOODIED BY THIS LAST ENCOUNTER WITH LIBYANS. DESPITE HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO SPECULATE ON FUTURE LIBYAN ACTIONS, HE ALSO LEFT IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS CONSIDER QADHAFI TO BE AN UNPREDICTABLE AND THEREFORE TROUBLESOME ELEMENT ON M.E. SCENE.

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